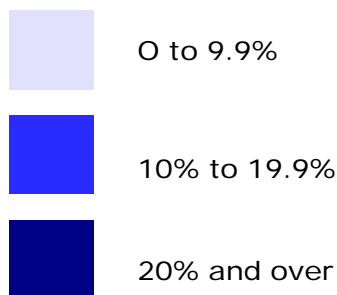
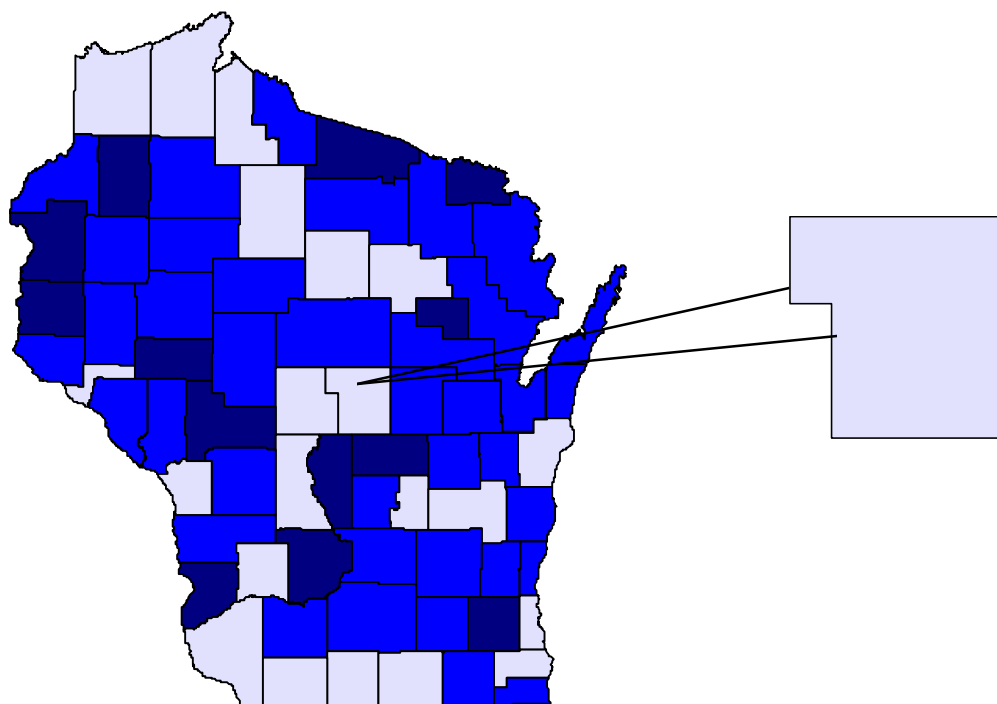


Portage County Workforce Profile

Job Growth 1994 to 1999



Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Division of Workforce Solutions
Bureau of Workforce Information
October 2001



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Introduction

The County Workforce Profile has been developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Bureau of Workforce Information (BWI) to provide a broad overview of Portage County's labor market. The data included in this fourth year of publication is for 1999 to maintain consistency with the previous publications and to provide the user with a single year of reference in order to draw comparisons and form a picture of related labor force and employment information.

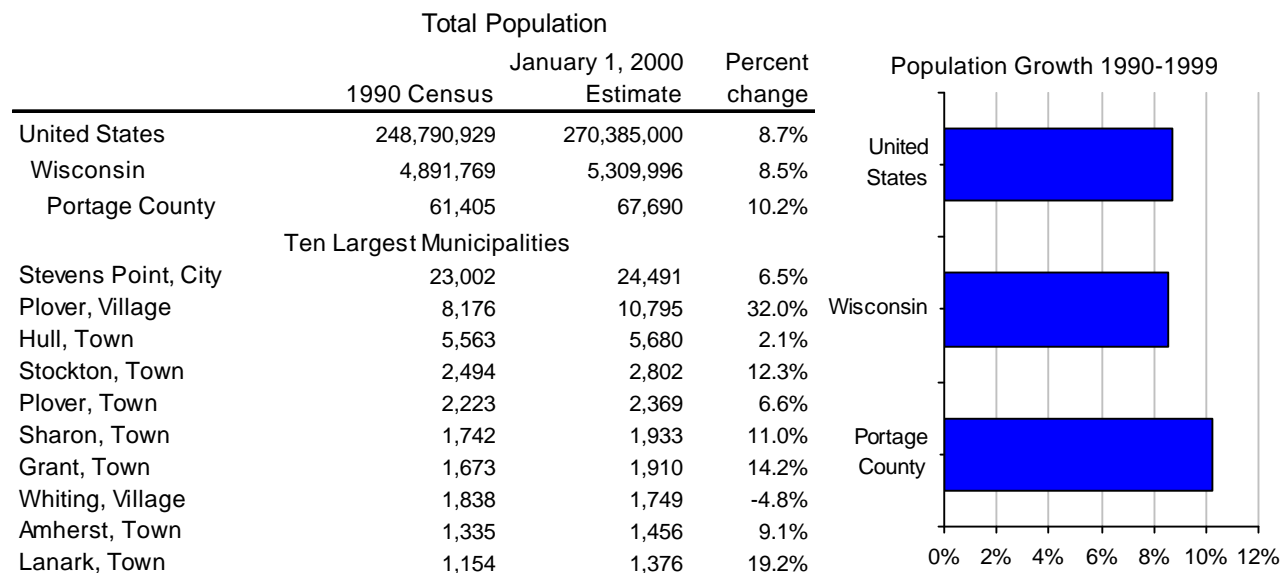
A variety of economic and demographic labor market information have been provided to describe the current labor market conditions in the counties and regions of Wisconsin. That information includes 1999 data on population, labor force, industries, employment, wages and income. The narrative describes how local conditions have changed over one-year and five-year intervals. Although population information is available from the 2000 census, it is not included in this publication since the period of time selected for all data sets is 1999. For more recent releases of information please consult the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Labor Market Information website: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi>.

For more detailed information or clarification, please contact your local labor market analyst, Dennis Goodwin, by telephone (715-261-7745) or email (goodwd@dwd.state.wi.us).

DWD is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or material in an alternate format, please contact the analyst listed above.

Portage County Population and Civilian Labor Force

Portage County's population has increased just a little over 10 percent during the 1990's, most of it in the Plover area just south of Stevens Point, one of the fastest growing areas in the state for its size. Portage County has grown faster than Wisconsin or the United States. The growth rate in Portage County accelerated during the late 1980's. This faster growth rate is the result of more people moving into the county than moving out of the county. Many of these immigrants have come to Portage County to attend the University, and they stay. This pattern reflects a large, positive net migration. Portage County's population also increased by having more births than deaths. This component of population change is called natural gain. A stable industrial picture and generally good economy have contributed more than anything else the population growth of this area.

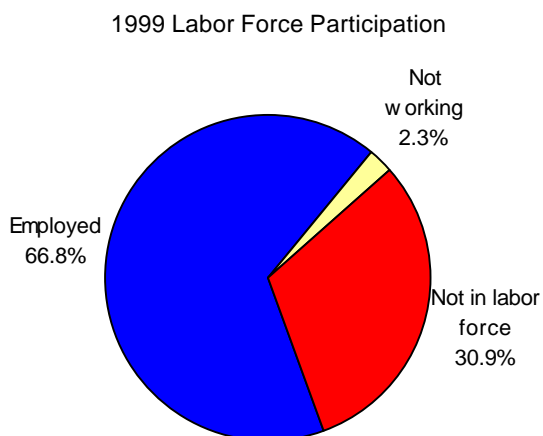


* Portage County portion only

Source: WI Dept. of Admin., Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Estimates*, January 1, 2000

People who are not working includes people who are unemployed and people who are not in the labor force. Unemployed does not include all people who are not working, some people who are not working are not technically unemployed. Examples of people who are not working but who are not unemployed are retirees or people who choose not to work. In Portage County, the fastest growing segment of the population is the 40 - 54 age group (about 42 percent), or those in their so-called prime earning years. This is an increase of about seven percent of just a year ago. The youngest group in the labor force in Portage County 16 - 24 years old) is actually growing very slowly, which serves to fuel somewhat the current labor shortage.

The term used to describe the relationship between the labor force and population is the participation rate. In Portage County, just over one quarter of the population is not in the labor force, or "participating". Almost 62 percent are working (either full time or part time), with about three percent unemployed. This means a participation rate for Portage County of about 67 percent, compared to 67 percent for the US, and 72 percent for the state.

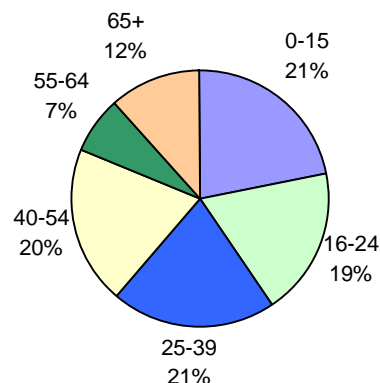


The 42 percent increase in labor force aged population between the ages of 40 and 54 is the result of the aging of baby-boomers. Of major significance to employers has been the slow growth in the number of younger workers. The decline in the number of 16 to 24 year olds and an increase in the number of businesses which traditionally hire large numbers of young workers has contributed to the current labor shortage, a situation that will become critical in the years to come.

Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Administration population estimates, Jan 2000, US Census Bureau, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Portage County Labor Force Age Population Distribution

Age Group	Population		Percent change
	1990 Census	1999 Estimate	
0-15	14,215	14,805	4.1%
16-24	12,107	12,649	4.5%
25-39	14,690	13,924	-5.2%
40-54	9,459	13,500	42.7%
55-64	4,313	4,886	13.3%
65+	6,621	7,927	19.7%



Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Admin, Demographic Services Center, Official Population Projections 1990-2020 and US Census Bureau

Portage County Civilian Labor Force Data

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor Force	36,100	36,500	37,800	38,100	37,500	36,200
Employed	34,200	34,800	36,200	36,500	36,000	35,000
Unemployed	1,900	1,670	1,550	1,640	1,480	1,190
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	4.6%	4.1%	4.3%	3.9%	3.3%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

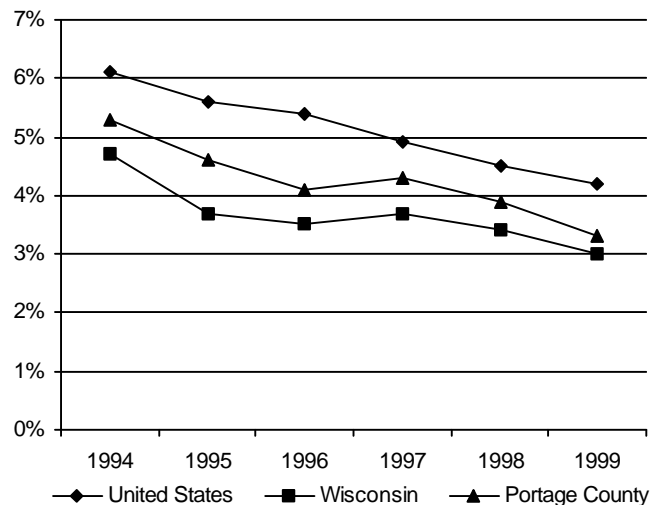
The unemployment rate in Portage County has been fairly stable from year to year, with no serious fluctuations. In 1994 it stood at 5.3 percent and by 1999, had declined just over two percentage points. This has been well below the US rate, and just above the state rate.

One advantage of the Portage County labor market is its relative stability. No one industrial element dominates the scene, with manufacturing playing an important enough role to keep working wages and income comfortably above the state average. This is due to the presence of several large paper mills in the area, as well as a variety of other businesses.

(Note - Although these 1990 Census Commuting numbers have not yet been updated by the recent Census, we do not anticipate any significant changes in the general pattern of movement.)

About 3,200 Portage County workers leave the area each day to work elsewhere, mainly to Wood County (about 1,778 making that trek). This is out of a total of about 26,000 employed within the county itself. By contrast, about 3,600 workers commute into Portage County each day from neighboring areas to work, the largest number again coming from Wood

Unemployment Rate Comparison



Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

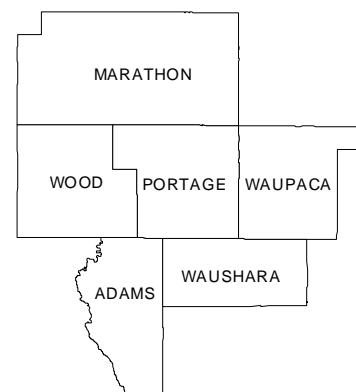
County.

It is difficult to say what kinds of jobs these workers are commuting to, or what their professions are. They are probably stable, permanent types of jobs, such as professional employment, or perhaps jobs in manufacturing firms in a neighboring county. Or, perhaps they are the kinds of jobs that typically take a person some distance from his or her home, like seasonal construction work.

Portage County Commuting Patterns

	Commute Into	Commute From	Net Commute
Wood	1,178	1,925	747
Marathon	623	828	205
Adams	9	98	89
Waupaca	697	336	-361
Waushara	166	317	151
Worked Elsewhere	579	155	-424
Total	3,252	3,659	407
Work within Portage County	26,823		

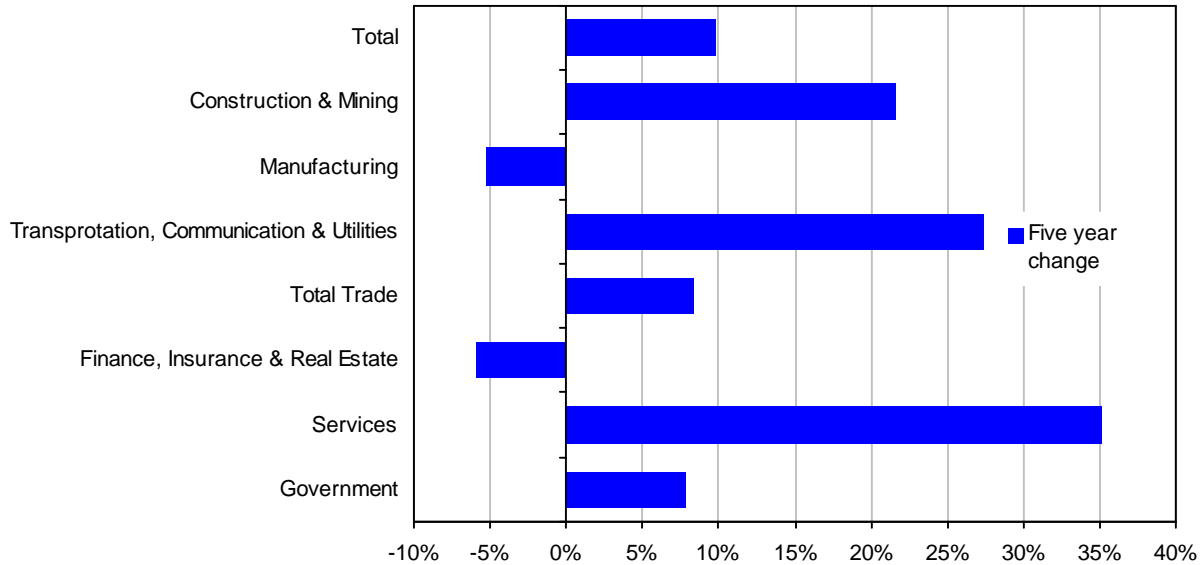
Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. *Wisconsin's Commuting Patterns*, 1994.



The seemingly large number of workers driving to and from Wood County appears strange, until we remember that both Portage and Wood Counties have several large manufacturing facilities, as well as large banking and insurance businesses. This cross-commute has become so large in recent years that a state road between Wisconsin Rapids and Plover/Stevens Point was recently widened to four lanes to accommodate the load.

This cross county area is in reality a single labor market, a trend that has been in place since the late sixties - early seventies. The area next to the above mentioned road, once agricultural land, is rapidly becoming urbanized in a fashion that has become very familiar throughout the state, as once-separate municipalities become indistinguishable except on a map or on the tax rolls.

Portage County Employment Change by Industry 1994 to 1999



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent change	
							1 year	5 year
Total	29,528	30,116	30,946	31,622	31,898	32,413	1.6%	9.8%
Goods Producing	7,069	7,100	7,145	7,628	7,194	6,954	-3.3%	-1.6%
Construction & Mining	956	977	1,068	1,261	1,071	1,162	8.6%	21.6%
Manufacturing	6,113	6,123	6,076	6,366	6,123	5,792	-5.4%	-5.3%
Durable	2,013	1,795	1,833	1,969	1,981	1,857	-6.3%	-7.8%
Nondurable	4,101	4,328	4,244	4,397	4,142	3,935	-5.0%	-4.0%
Service Producing	22,459	23,016	23,802	23,994	24,704	25,459	3.1%	13.4%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	1,356	1,463	1,537	1,624	1,770	1,841	4.0%	35.8%
Total Trade	7,185	7,208	7,335	7,583	7,621	7,783	2.1%	8.3%
Wholesale	1,336	1,312	1,406	1,465	1,514	1,578	4.2%	18.0%
Retail	5,848	5,896	5,929	6,118	6,107	6,205	1.6%	6.1%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	3,652	3,717	3,788	3,796	3,655	3,437	-6.0%	-5.9%
Services & Misc.	4,854	5,106	5,421	5,671	6,002	6,562	9.3%	35.2%
Total Government	5,412	5,521	5,721	5,320	5,656	5,837	3.2%	7.8%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Nonfarm Wage & Salary estimates.

Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding agricultural, military, and self-employed workers. This data measures the number of jobs within the county without consideration of where the job-holder lives. Thus, this information is often referred to as "place of work" data.

Several sectors of the Portage County industrial landscape increased substantially in the period of 1994 - 1999. Construction employment has increased at a healthy rate (about 22 percent over the period), but manufacturing has been off by just over five percent. Communications and utilities expanded by about 500 jobs in the county (about 35 percent) which is not unusual in a county with a large and growing population.

Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate has declined slightly over the 1994 - 1999 period, but this industry remains a strong player in the Portage County area with the world headquarters of a major insurance company located here.

Portage County's Largest Industries and Employers

Top 10 Industry Groups

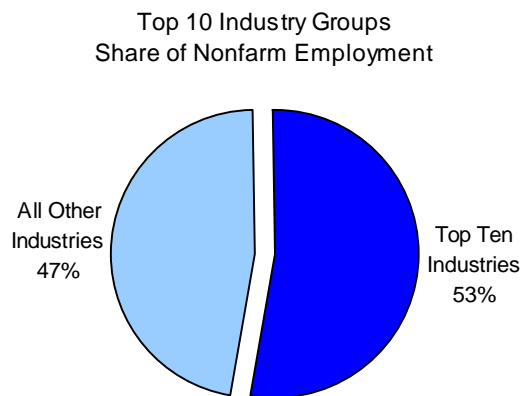
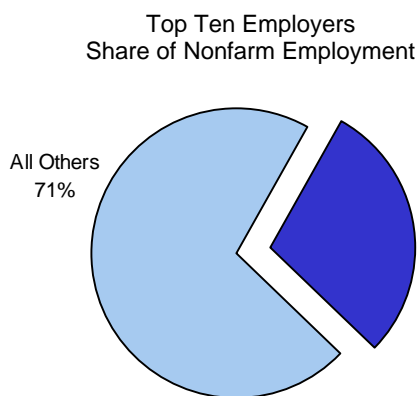
Industry Group	March 2000		Numerical Change	
	Employers	Employment	1 Year	5 Years
Educational Services	7	2,940	-20	113
Insurance Carriers	*	*	*	*
Eating And Drinking Places	134	2,113	2	141
Health Services	64	2,055	109	507
Food And Kindred Products	12	1,900	311	-41
Trucking And Warehousing	64	1,224	-49	39
Paper And Allied Products	*	*	*	*
Food Stores	16	1,139	56	29
Executive, Legislative, And General	25	1,131	-32	-20
Wholesale Trade-Nondurable Goods	48	946	64	-65

*data suppressed to maintain confidentiality

Top 10 Employers

Company	Product or Service	Size
Sentry Insurance A Mutual Co	Insurance Underwriters	1000+
Stevens Point Public School	Public Schools	1000+
The Copps Corp	Groceries & Related	1000+
University Of Wisconsin Stevens	State Univ. System	1000+
Stora-Enso	Paper Production	500-999
Mccain Foods Usa Inc	Groceries & Related	500-999
St Michael'S Hospital Of Stevens	Health Care	500-999
County Of Portage	Local Government	500-999
Worzalla Publishing Co	Printing & Publishing	500-999
Rice Medical Center Sc	Health Care	250-499

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information Bureau, ES-202 file tape, 1st quarter 1999 and LMI benchmark 2000.



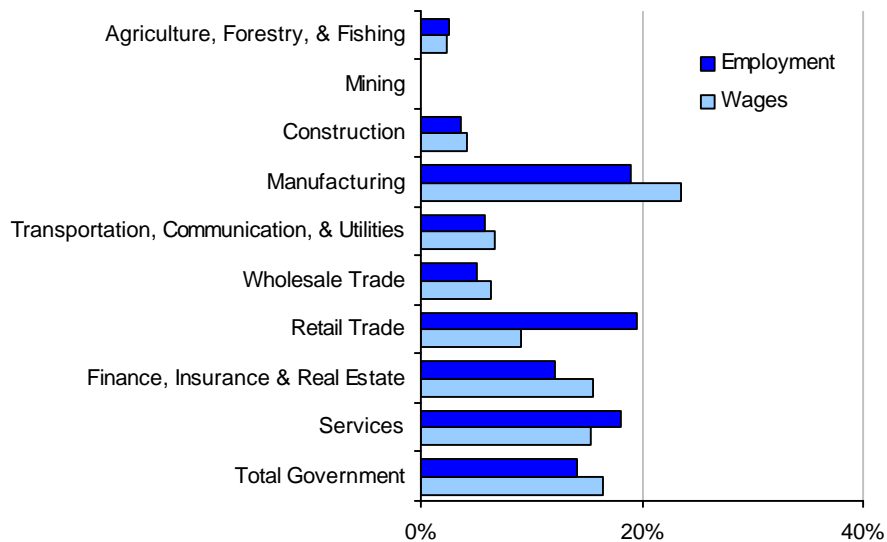
Portage County is one of few counties in Central Wisconsin which can boast of local employers with a payroll of more than 1,000 employees. The Stevens Point area is noted for, among other things, for their manufacture of coated papers and other paper products, and as the headquarters of a world-wide insurance business. Employment in these businesses represents many blue and white collar occupations, in the production, material handling, and clerical and professional fields. Although recent changes in ownership in a major local paper manufacturer will mean a degree of downsizing, exactly what effect this will have on employment levels is not yet known.

The top ten private employers slice of the employment pie (left pie chart) is typically very narrow in the more rural counties of the northern part of the state. In the core counties of Portage, Marathon, and Wood it passes the 15-20 percent mark and higher, due to the presence of a few very large employers. Other large employers represent the variety of industries that is one of the most important elements of the economic strength of the area.

Portage County Employment and Wages 1999

	Annual Average Wage	State Average Wage	Percent of State Average	Percent change 1 year	Percent change 5 year	Number of Workers
All Industries	\$26,420	\$29,609	89.2%	3.3%	18.8%	30,475
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	\$24,024	\$21,499	111.7%	8.1%	33.2%	795
Mining	*	\$39,968	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$31,493	\$36,772	85.6%	6.2%	24.8%	1,082
Manufacturing	\$32,741	\$37,773	86.7%	6.9%	19.5%	5,779
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	\$30,010	\$34,523	86.9%	2.9%	14.3%	1,790
Wholesale Trade	\$33,333	\$38,048	87.6%	7.0%	26.4%	1,548
Retail Trade	\$12,281	\$15,066	81.5%	2.1%	12.4%	5,936
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	\$33,917	\$37,911	89.5%	0.1%	21.9%	3,687
Services	\$22,513	\$26,041	86.5%	1.8%	25.6%	5,525
Total Government	\$31,071	\$32,017	97.0%	1.9%	12.4%	4,285

Total Employment and Wage Distribution by Industry Division

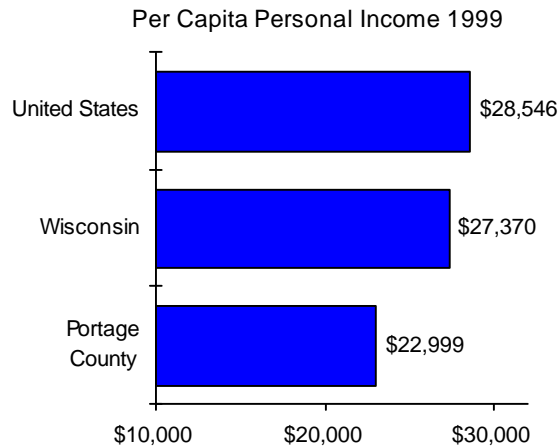


Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, *Employment, Wages and Taxes Due covered by Wisconsin's U.C. Law, Tables 209-211.*

When one looks at the table at the top of the page, the thing that seems to stand out most is the fourth column, indicating the percent of the state average wage paid in different industries in Portage County. The wage levels in Portage County compare very well to those paid workers across the state as a whole. This is not surprising, considering that manufacturing employment in the county represents such a high percentage of the whole. Portage County's average annual wages in finance, insurance and real estate are very strong, a reflection of having the corporate headquarters of a major insurance company here.

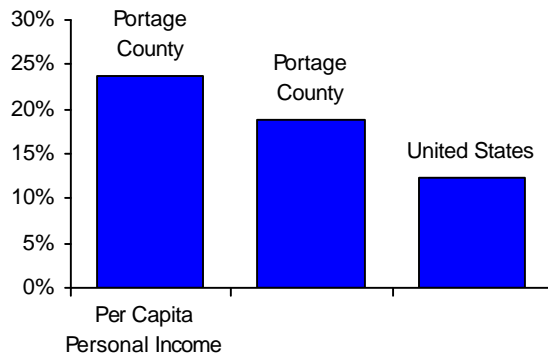
Retail trade employment has a good share of county employment, but earnings are a fraction of those in manufacturing, which is certainly not unique to Portage County. The industrial elements that even come close to approaching manufacturing and finance, insurance and real estate in average annual earnings are those of construction and transportation and utilities. These occupations have increased in recent years and include many high paying professions and occupations falling under organized labor.

Portage County Wage and Income Data



Per capita income is total income divided by the total number of residents. Income includes wages earned, dividends from investments, and transfer payments from the government. Portage County's per capita income ranked 32nd. of Wisconsin's 72 counties during 1998. Per capita income can be influenced by the number of wage earners, average family size, and the median age of the residents. Per capita income can influence the type of services and housing available within a county.

Over the past six years, Portage County per capita income has increased by about 24 percent and wages earned in Portage County have increased by about 17 percent. In any area where per capita and earned wage income are fairly close together, this seems to indicate a relatively small amount of non wage income in the area, such as benefits from investments, retirement income and other types of non wage payments, compared to so-called earned wages.



Per Capita Personal Income

							Percent Change	
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1 year	5 year
United States	\$22,581	\$23,562	\$24,651	\$25,874	\$27,321	\$28,546	4.5%	26.4%
Wisconsin	\$21,699	\$22,573	\$23,554	\$24,791	\$26,227	\$27,370	4.4%	26.1%
Portage County	\$18,572	\$19,252	\$20,177	\$21,405	\$22,323	\$22,999	3.0%	23.8%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

Selected Occupational Wage Data

	Mean	Median
Administrative Secretary	\$13.20	\$14.00
Assembler	\$9.14	\$8.63
Cooks, Short Order	\$6.84	\$6.46
Driver/Sales Workers	\$10.29	\$10.73
Janitors & Cleaners	\$7.91	\$7.30
Machine Feeders & Offbearers	\$8.95	\$8.44
Welders & Cutters	\$12.99	\$13.05
Computer Programmers	\$20.48	\$19.39
Construction Carpenter	\$11.47	\$11.15
Food Preparation Workers	\$6.65	\$6.14
General Office Clerk	\$8.82	\$8.59
Licensed Practical Nurse	\$13.03	\$12.94
Salesperson, Retail	\$8.59	\$6.88
Cashiers	\$6.78	\$6.37
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, etc.	\$7.83	\$7.75

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information.

Wages paid for work within a county can impact the type of goods and services which may be purchased. Examining wage structures can be an important part of the hiring process for both job seekers and employers. The mean wage is the sum of all wages divided by the number of wage earners; this is often referred to as an "average". The median wage is the midpoint of all wages; there are exactly the same number of wage earners above and below this wage. If the mean and median are relatively close the labor market for that particular worker is probably tight or very competitive.

Wages in Portage County, especially in the manufacturing sector, compare well to most of the occupations listed at left..